

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9038

INFO USIA WASHDC

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCUNC SEOUL

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, MOPS, KS, KN, US

SUBJECT: MONDAY ROK MEDIA REACTION TO DMZ INCIDENT

REF: (A) STATE 206131 (DTG 190517Z AUG 76), (B) SEOUL 6500
(DTG 200910Z AUG 76), (C) SEOUL 6476 (DTG 200733Z AUG 76)

BEGIN SUMMARY: RAMIFICATIONS OF DMZ MURDERS OF AUGUST 18

CONTINUED TO DOMINATE ALL ROK MEDIA OVER WEEKEND AND INTO AUG. 23.

MUCH OF FRONTPAGE COVERAGE WAS FROM WIRE-SERVICE REPORTS OF

REACTION IN WASHINGTON. EDITORIAL REACTION WAS STRONG. END

SUMMARY.

1. KOREAN NEWSPAPERS ON AUGUST 21-23 CONTINUED TO GIVE HEAVY
COVERAGE TO EVENTS IN AFTERMATH OF DMZ INCIDENT ON AUGUST 18.

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MORNING PAPERS ON SATURDAY HEADLINED COVERAGE OF PRESIDENT

PAK'S SPEECH REPORTED IN REFTELS (B) AND (C).

2. PAPERS PUBLISHING ON SUNDAY (ONLY MORNING EDITIONS) GAVE HEAD-LINE OR FRONT-PAGE TREATMENT TO STATEMENT ISSUED BY BLUE HOUSE SPOKESMAN IM PANG-HYON ON CONCLUSION OF ROK NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (KNSC) MEETING IN BLUE HOUSE ON AUGUST 21. IM'S STATEMENT SAID THAT PRESIDENT PAK HAD CALLED THE KNSC MEETING FOR 0930 THAT DAY AND THAT MEETING HAD ANALYZED AND EVALUATED SECURITY SITUATION IN KOREAN PENINSULA AND ALL OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES. STATEMENT PLACED BLAME FOR DMZ INCIDENT SQUARELY ON "KIM IL-SONG'S PLANNED WAR PROVOCATIONS" AND SAID THAT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS WOULD DEPEND ON "ATTITUDE OF NORTH KOREAN COMMUNISTS."

3. IM FURTHER STATED THAT "UNDER CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN KOREAN AND U.S. GOVERNMENTS, THE UN TROOPS ARE PREPARED TO RESPOND IMMEDIATELY TO ANY PROVOCATION" AND CALLED ON CITIZENS TO TRUST GOVERNMENT AND ROK ARMY AND DO THEIR BEST IN THEIR WORK. STATEMENT CLOSED WITH REPEATED EMPHASIS ON FACT THAT "NOW, MORE THAN EVER, IS A TIME WHICH REQUIRES ALL CITIZENS' FIRM AND TOTAL NATIONAL UNITY."

4. CHO-SON IL-BO FOR AUGUST 22 GAVE FRONT-PAGE TREATMENT TO STORY OF PRIVATE MEETING OF UNC AND NORTH KOREAN (NK) CHIEF DELEGATES TO MAC ON AUGUST 21. STORY, WHICH NOTED THAT ADM. FRUDDEN FOR UN SIDE HAD BEEN ACCCOMPANIED BY ONLY ONE RECORDER-INTERPRETER, WAS CREDITED TO "RELATED NEWS SOURCES." IT NOTED THIS WAS FIRST TIME IN 23-YEAR HISTORY OF ARMISTICE AGREEMENT THAT NK SIDE HAD EVER GIVEN A FORMAL RESPONSE TO CHIEF DELEGATE OF OPPOSITE SIDE IN RESPONSE TO A PROVOCATION NK HAD CAUSED, AND QUOTED "SOURCES" AS SPECULATING THAT THIS WAS SUBMISSION OF NK TO HARD-LINE ATTITUDE TAKEN BY UN FORCES.

5. CHOSON ILBO ALSO RAN UNUSUAL FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL ENTITLED "UNTIL WHEN AND WHY MUST WE BEAR IT?--WE CANNOT SIMPLY TAKE WHAT THEY GIVE WHENEVER AND WHEREVER."

6. OTHER STORIES RECEIVING FRONT-PAGE PLAY CONCERNED CUTTING OF PANMUNJOM TREE, B-52 TRAINING FLIGHTS AND OTHER MILITARY MOVES, ALERT OF U.S. FORCES IN JAPAN, AND RETURN OF AMB. SNEIDER.

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7. STORIES RECEIVING LESS PROMINENT TREATMENT INCLUDED DEMANDS FOR PUNISHMENT OF NORTH MADE BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLYMEN IN EMERGENCY JOINT SESSION OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEES, MANY KOREAN ORGANIZATIONS, AND MANY MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS JUST NOW RESUMING SESSIONS AFTER SUMMER VACATION.

8. RADIO AND TV CONTINUED TO GIVE TOP COVERAGE TO STORY.

RADIO NEWS AUGUST 23 FEATURED TEXT OF KIM IL-SONG'S STATEMENT

AS RELEASED IN WASHINGTON, RESPONSE OF STATE DEPARTMENT, AND PRESENCE OF CARRIER MIDWAY OFF COAST OF NK. TV OVER WEEKEND SHOWED RALLIES BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, KOREAN CHURCH SERVICES ON SUNDAY FOR TWO U.S. OFFICERS KILLED, INTERVIEWS WITH MEN-IN-STREET, AND PANEL DISCUSSIONS. KBS-TV (GOVT STATION) WAS NOTE-WORTHY FOR RUNNING PLACARDS AND SLOGANS CONDEMNING NK BETWEEN REGULAR PROGRAMS.

9. ON AUGUST 23, TONG-A ILBO CONTINUED HEAVY COVERAGE, HEAD-LINING RELEASE IN WASHINGTON OF KIM IL-SONG'S MESSAGE TO CINCUNC AND ITS REJECTION BY WHITE HOURSE AND DEPARTMENT.

10. EDITORIAL COMMENTS WERE VERY DETERMINED IN TONE. ON SATURDAY, THE HANGUK ILBO REMARKED "KIM IL-SONG IS MAD FOR WAR IN ORDER TO FIND A WAY TO GET RID OF NORTH KOREA'S (NK) ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES, BUT WE DO NOT WANT WAR. NEVERTHELESS, WE WILL NOW TAKE IMMEDIATE RETALIATORY MOVES AGAINST ANY RECURRENCE OF ILLEGAL PROVOCATIONS BY NK REGARDLESS OF THEIR SCALE." CHOSON ILBO ALSO STRONGLY BACKED UP PRESIDENT PAK'S STATEMENT: "ANY FUTURE BARBARY BY THE NK COMMUNISTS SHOULD BE GIVEN IMMEDIATE PUNISHMENT. AND WHEN A DECISIVE TIME COMES, ONE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE CHOOSY." WRITERS LIMNED THE POPULAR FEELINGS AS FOLLOWS: "AFTER THE INCIDENT, THE PEOPLE WERE DIS-GRUNTLED, ASKING: 'WHY ALWAYS BE THE VICTIM?' WE SAY THAT THE PEOPLE ARE FULLY JUSTIFIED IN THEIR DEMAND. TO TELL THE TRUTH, WITHOUT SUCH NATIONAL SENTIMENT, WE MIGHT HAVE PROVED ANOTHER VIETNAM LONG AGO." ALSO ON AUG. 21, CHUNGANG ILBO STATED, "NK IS APPARENTLY SEEKING ANOTHER VERSION OF VIETNAM IN KOREA BY IGNORING THE SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE AND CONTACTING THE U.S. DIRECTLY, WITH THE SUPPORT OF ANTI-WESTERN NON-ALIGNED LEFTISTS AND OF THE NEO-ISOLATIONIST TENDENCIES IN AMERICA. FUNCTION AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMBAT READINESS OF U.S. FORCES IN KOREA SHOULD BE RE-EXAMINED FOR POSSIBLE CONTINGENCIES IN KOREA. ROK MILITARY MODERNIZATION AND SELF-RELIANT DEFENSE PROGRAMS SHOULDN'T BE DELAYED. ROKG AND USG MUST TRY TO EXPLAIN DMZ INCIDENT IN DETAIL NOT ONLY TO FRIENDLY NATIONS BUT ALSO TO USSR, PRC, AND THE NON-ALIGNED SO WE CAN OSTRACIZE NK FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY."

11. COLUMN COMMENT: CHOSON ILBO "NEWS OF NEWS" COLUMN ON AUG. 22 NOTED THAT PRESIDENT PAK HAD REVIEWED HIS SPEECH FOR THE THIRD MILITARY ACADEMY GRADUATION BEFORE DELIVERING IT ON AUG. 20. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENTIAL AIDES HAD INSERTED SOME REFERENCES TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT, PAK HAD THEM REWRITTEN TO ADD SEVERAL OF THE MOST NOTEWORTHY PHRASES, SUCH AS "THERE IS A LIMIT TO OUR PATIENCE." "ONE ONLY NEEDS A TRUNCHEON TO HANDLE A MAD DOG." AND "NOW, IF THEY CAUSE ANOTHER PROVOCATION, BIG OR SMALL, WE

WILL TAKE PUNITIVE ACTION IMMEDIATELY."

SNEIDER

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